

31<sup>st</sup> Sunday of the Year A October 30, 2011 – Fr. Gerald Haemmerle

This past week we celebrated the 49<sup>th</sup> birthday of the parish by having a parish mission. It was fairly well attended, 300 plus each evening. The theme was the Eucharist, taken from a letter by Pope Benedict XV1. It was in three parts, to believe, to celebrate, and to live. Fr. Richard Fragomini gave the mission, and he was delightful, he had great humor, but more importantly he gave us much food for thought with his simple yet profound points. Each evening he spoke of those Easter eggs being dipped into the colored dye until they take on their bright color, so must we be repeatedly dipped into our Catholicism and take on the rich color of our faith. How important weekend mass is, but also other opportunities to grow in our faith that we are offering this jubilee year.

Each evening we had two parishioners get up and share a reflection, a witness of their faith. I was in awe of all six of them who shared with us how important their faith was to each of them. I must say that the last witness, given by the youngest of the witnesses, a teenage girl, Kristin, stole the show. She talked on the third part of the mission, to live the faith. She shared her experience of going to Appalachia on a service mission, and being profoundly touched by a handicapped person there, so much so that it has changed her life. She really then caught on fire and challenged all of us to go out from weekly mass and serve our brothers and sisters. She said it was the Jesus thing to do.

We have a beautiful banner crafted by Joanne Kepes that will be on display throughout this whole jubilee year to remind us that we need to be constantly dipped into our faith, and we need to keep going out into our community, our world, and serve others. We also have a banner over the main entrance to remind us of the same thing.

Tomorrow (today, at this mass) our eighth grade Confirmandi, those to be confirmed next May, will be enrolled officially in the program. They will have a retreat day, several morning sessions, walk a faith journey with their sponsor, and be expected to do some service project. Kristin, that teenage girl who gave the witness, is a wonderful example for all these young people. Just a few years ago she was confirmed, and how her faith has grown. But she has also given a wonderful example to all of us older people in the parish, and shown us how real the faith of young people can be. We are all called to deepen our faith. It begins with Sunday mass, but doesn't end there.

Next weekend Fr. David Korth, and a parishioner, Sarah Snake, will be visiting with us and telling us about the Saint Augustine Mission on an Indian Reservation in north east Nebraska. We are beginning a formal twining relationship. We still have a close relationship with our neighboring parishes, and a special one with St. Benedict the More, but his new one is different. Our Social Justice Commission have studied this project for a number of years, and discerned that this is the direction our parish should move. It is not a Social Justice Commission project but a parish wide project. We will begin to share with another Catholic parish that is culturally different than ours. We will share with them our faith and culture and perhaps some of our resources, they in turn will share with us their faith and culture and values, their love and respect of God's creation and their deep spiritual sense and their rich traditions. With each of us having schools, the possibilities of sharing are endless. Several of our parishioners have visited their parish, next week we welcome them to our parish.

This coming Tuesday we celebrate the feast of All Saints, and on Wednesday the feast of All Souls. Fr. Fragomini spoke beautifully of our rich tradition of the Communion of the Saints and praying for our deceased loved ones. In the atrium is our book of the Dead. You are invited to place their the names of your deceased loved ones.

Also you might have noticed the decorations by the bust of St. Charles Borromeo, also in the atrium. We celebrate his feast this Friday, and we will be praying to him in a special way during this jubilee year.